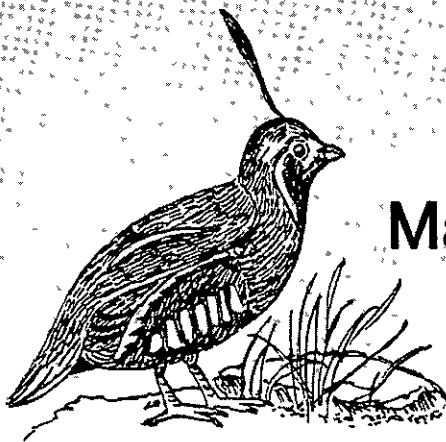


## CHAPTER II

# Public Issues and Management Concerns



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### PUBLIC ISSUES AND MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

The formal scoping process to identify issues related to the development of the Forest Plan began October 25, 1979, with the publication in the Federal Register of the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Mendocino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. This formal announcement was followed by similar announcements in newspapers within the general area of the Forest

To assist in the identification of planning issues, six public meetings were held during the period from November 19, through December 5, 1979. During this same period, Forest Service managers identified internal concerns regarding management of the Forest. At the close of the scoping period on January 7, 1980, 91 responses had been received. An analysis of these public responses and the internal management concerns resulted in the identification of 40 planning issues.

The final list of public issues and management concerns, and how they are addressed by the Forest Plan, are described below. Detailed information describing the scoping process and the selection of issues and concerns is located in Appendix A of the Environmental Impact Statement.

1. The need to manage and utilize range resources and improve rangeland grazing.

The Plan provides for proper management through the standards and guidelines. Each allotment is managed according to its own specific management plan and objectives, which identify forage capabilities, number and class of livestock, season of use, management strategy, management system, range potential opportunities, and problems or conflicts to be resolved. Livestock grazing is expected to average approximately 8,000 AUMs during the first five decades.

Restoration of depleted rangelands will be accomplished based on the needs and priorities contained in the Watershed Improvement Needs (WIN) inventory and analysis of rangeland condition.

2. The need to reduce conflicts between range grazing and other resource uses.

Forest standards and guidelines provide for the coordination of livestock grazing and other competing resource uses in order to minimize conflicts. Compatibility with accomplishment of management objectives for the area will be the determining factor in establishing resource priorities and resolving use conflicts.

3. The need to provide for various wilderness management options.

The California Wilderness Act of 1984 resulted in the addition of approximately 25,000 acres to that portion of the existing Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness administered by the Mendocino National Forest, and the creation of the 37,000-acre Snow Mountain Wilderness. The Act further directs that roadless areas not designated by the Act as wilderness, or designated as further planning areas, shall not be given further consideration for their suitability for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System prior to the time of scheduled Plan revision or approximately 10 years. There are no designated "further planning areas" on the Forest.

The Plan directs that portions of the released roadless areas be managed for primitive and/or semi-primitive non-motorized recreation with the remainder of the areas being managed for other

resource values. Those areas managed under the Backcountry Prescription will be eligible for consideration for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System at some time in the future. The Yuki management area was designated, and direction developed, to maintain wilderness characteristics until considered for designation as a wilderness. The Yuki management area is part of a proposal for the Yuki Wilderness which would combine several roadless areas and further planning areas managed by BLM.

4. The need to consider the effects of management activities outside wilderness on values contained within wilderness, as well as the effects of wilderness designation on adjacent lands

The types of activities as well as the intensity of management of lands adjacent to wilderness were decided upon after consideration of the probable effects of such management on the values contained within wilderness. Also, the boundaries of wilderness were established to include those values warranting preservation under the Wilderness Act within the boundaries as drawn. The effects of wilderness on adjacent lands is taken into account through establishment of the Visual Quality Objectives (VQO) adopted by the Plan.

5. The need to provide additional access to wilderness.

The Plan provides for the development of Wilderness Implementation Schedules for the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel and Snow Mountain Wilderness which will specify development of appropriate access consistent with Plan objectives and anticipated use.

6. The need to give all qualifying rivers Wild and Scenic River status.

On January 19, 1981, the Secretary of the Interior designated five California rivers as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System under Section 2(a)(ii) of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The Middle Fork of the Eel River, from the Forest boundary to the boundary of the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness, was one of the rivers included in this designation. Under the Plan the upper reaches of the Middle Fork of the Eel River, Balm of Gilead Creek, and the Middle Fork of Stony Creek are recommended for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The recommended classification for these Rivers would be "Wild." The outstandingly remarkable features found along the Black Butte River, Cold Creek, and the lower portion of Thomas Creek will also be protected under the Plan pending completion of further analysis to determine their suitability for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The potential classification for these Rivers would also be "Wild."

7. Mass soil movement, instability of soils, and the effects of management on accelerated soil movement.

Forest standards and guidelines provide direction for avoidance of land disturbing activities in areas with known or suspected instability where there is an unacceptable risk of mass wasting or other accelerated soil loss. Additionally, to the extent that these areas have currently been identified through the planning process, they have been included in the determination of land suitability for various types of management activities. Approximately 15,700 acres have been removed from the suitable land base due to the concern for land stability. Unstable or potentially unstable areas adjacent to streams will be protected from disturbance with the establishment of riparian reserves.

8. The need to enhance water quality and quantity, soil productivity, and restore watershed conditions.

Forest standards and guidelines for watershed management require that water quality be protected through implementation of Best Management Practices, and the establishment of riparian reserves with severe limitations imposed on the type and extent of permitted activities. The Plan further directs watershed improvement be accomplished on approximately 6,420 acres. Opportunities for major increases in water yield as a result of management activity are highly limited. An increase of about 900 acre-feet per year is expected during the first decade.

Forest standards and guidelines provide for the maintenance of soil productivity through establishment of watershed thresholds which provide an indication of when the upper limit for the amount of land disturbance within the watershed is being approached.

9. The need to manage fire to protect and improve resources.

The fire management program under the Plan emphasizes the suppression of wildfire commensurate with the value of the resources protected. Conventional ground forces including engines, handcrews, etc., provide the primary initial attack forces for the majority of the fires on the Forest. A moderate fire prevention program is maintained with sufficient detection resources to permit early detection of wildfire.

A moderate fuels treatment is maintained with an emphasis on treatment of natural and activity fuels.

Where prescriptive conditions are met, prescribed fire may be utilized within Wilderness to create conditions where naturally occurring fire can be permitted to play a more natural ecological role.

10. The management of natural brushfields to maintain ecosystem integrity.

Forest-wide standards and guidelines provide for maintenance of plant and animal diversity. The Plan provides fuel treatment within approximately 50% of the chaparral community. Natural processes would operate within the remainder of the chaparral community.

Additionally, the Plan and EIS establishes a 570-acre Research Natural Area in the chamise-chaparral vegetative type.

11. The effects of prescribed fire on other resource values.

The Plan provides for a prescribed burning program of about 5,350 acres per year on approximately 106,990 acres of chaparral covered lands. The primary effects of this program are expected to include reduced risk of catastrophic wildfire through fuels reduction and modification, and increased quantity and quality of forage for wildlife and livestock.

12. The need to construct, operate, and maintain transportation facilities.

The Plan provides for construction of 31 miles of new road, reconstruction of approximately 133 miles of existing road, and maintenance of about 2,463 miles of road during the first decade in support of resource programs specified by the Plan.

- 13 The need to require corridors to the extent practicable to minimize environmental impacts caused by the proliferation of separate rights-of-way.
- The Plan contains direction which requires new utility lines be confined to existing rights-of-way to the extent possible, or to those areas subsequently approved through the environmental analysis process.
- 14 The need to reduce or eliminate conflicts between recreational uses.
- Forest-wide standards and guidelines provide for the integration of recreation planning and management with other management activities through the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum system. Separation of conflicting recreational uses has been a consideration in the development of the Forest Plan and will continue to receive consideration during Plan implementation and planning at the project level. Individual Management Area direction provides the basis for resolution of use conflicts and establishing use priorities.
15. The need to provide various recreational options.
- The Plan provides for a variety of recreation opportunities as expressed through the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) system. Refer to Appendix F for a description of the ROS categories.
- 16 The need to consider the effects of other management activities on recreational opportunities, as well as the effects of recreation on management of other resources.
- These effects have been taken into consideration in the development of the mix of resource uses contained in the Plan and are described in Chapter IV of the FEIS.
- 17 The need to produce timber and wood fiber.
- The Plan establishes the intensity of management for the timber resources on the Forest based on the capability, availability, and suitability of the lands for timber management and sets the allowable sale quantity for the plan period at 12.2 MMBF.
- 18 The need to consider departure from base harvest levels (non-declining yields).
- Departure from non-declining yield was considered during development of the proposed Plan but was eliminated from detailed study since multiple-use values were not enhanced over the Plan.
- 19 The need to consider various rotation lengths and the effects of rotation lengths on other resource values.
- Forest standards and guidelines provide for varying rotation lengths as necessary to maintain or enhance other resource values. Average rotation lengths range from about 100 years on those lands managed for hardwood retention and high wildlife (primarily deer) habitat capability, to 160+ years within special management areas.

20 The need to analyze even-age and uneven-age management systems

Standards and guidelines for the selection of appropriate silvicultural systems are specified in the Pacific Southwest Regional Guides. Within these standards and guidelines, the Forest Plan provides for the use of a mix of even-aged and uneven-aged management systems to accomplish resource management goals. Of the 61,000 acres of capable, available, and suitable (CAS) timberlands under the Forest Plan, approximately 51,000 acres are planned for modified even-age management. Uneven-age management would be applied to the remaining suitable timberlands.

21 The need to convert timber sites from brush to commercial conifers.

All National Forest lands have been reviewed for their capability, availability, and suitability for timber management. The Plan identifies those lands to be managed for timber production and the intensity under which they are to be managed. No lands are identified for conversion from brush to timber.

22. The impacts of timber harvest activities on other activities and resources.

The effects of timber management activities are described in Chapter IV of the FEIS.

23 The need for the protection and enhancement of anadromous fish habitat.

The Plan provides for medium to high quality habitat for anadromous fish species as defined by the Wildlife Habitat Capability Models (Appendix E). Anadromous fish habitat will be protected and enhanced through the implementation of riparian reserves, attaining the aquatic conservation strategy objectives, and through special emphasis within the key watersheds. Additionally, the management of the fisheries resource within the Middle Fork of the Eel River will continue to be governed by the 1980 Summer Steelhead Management Plan.

24 The need to maintain or improve fish and wildlife habitat.

The Plan provides for medium to high quality habitat for the selected management indicator species as described by the Wildlife Habitat Capability Models (Appendix E). The Plan contains additional specific standards and guidelines for management of the peregrine falcon, bald eagle, osprey, goshawk, and northern spotted owl.

25. The need to discover, manage, protect, and interpret heritage resource values which are qualified or may qualify for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Plan contains direction for the completion of heritage resource inventories prior to any land disturbing activity. Inventory intensity, field survey coverage, and inventory reports shall be consistent with standards contained in FSM 2360. Inventoried heritage properties will be evaluated for significance in accordance with the requirements of 36 CFR 800 and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's (ACHP) "Procedures for the Evaluation of Historic and Cultural Properties." In the consultation process with the State Historic Preservation Officer and the ACHP, properties determined to be eligible, will be formally nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

26. The constraining effects of heritage resource management on the management of other resources.

Heritage resource management may affect management of other resources by either making lands unavailable for certain types of activities (i.e., timber harvest and road construction) or by increasing the cost of the activity due to the need to mitigate the effects of the activity on heritage properties. The potential effects of heritage resource management on other resource programs are discussed in Chapter III of the FEIS. The estimated cost of mitigation is included in the cost of implementing the Plan.

27. The need to identify, protect, and enhance visual quality.

Under the Plan, approximately 137,800 acres of National Forest land within wilderness and other formally classified areas will be managed to meet a Visual Quality Objective (VQO) of preservation. An additional 72,900 acres along primary travel routes, semi-primitive recreation areas, and within areas of concentrated recreation use are to be managed to meet a VQO of retention. A VQO of partial retention is to be met on another 347,400 acres within the Forest, primarily along the remaining travel routes serving recreation needs, within Late Successional Reserves, and in areas managed for semi-primitive recreation opportunities. These and the remaining VQO's are displayed on the accompanying Visual Quality Objective Map.

28. The effects of maintaining visual quality on other resource management opportunities.

The effects of visual resource management are described in Chapter IV of the FEIS and have been considered in the development of the Plan.

29. The need to assess probabilities of mineral exploration and development for immediate and future need, and to consider nonrenewable resources in the management of renewable resources.

Although the potential for the discovery of significant new mineral deposits of economic importance within the Forest is considered to be relatively low, the Plan places a priority on maintaining the availability of National Forest lands for mineral exploration and possible development. Withdrawal from mineral entry is recommended only in those cases where exploration and development would preclude accomplishment of other specific objectives for an area as in the case of Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, or Research Natural Area designation. A total of approximately 4,140 additional acres are recommended for withdrawal.

30. The need to assess the potential for development of geothermal resources.

The Forest lies just to the north of the Geysers geothermal field and there have been numerous applications filed for geothermal leases on the Forest. All of the applications have been withdrawn. Due to the limited activity in the area of geothermal exploration, the extent or presence of a geothermal resource within the Forest remains largely unknown. The potential for development of geothermal resources on the Forest is further discussed in Chapter III of the Plan and FEIS.

31. The need to recognize opportunities for development of alternative energy sources.

Opportunities for the development of alternative energy sources are maintained under the Plan and are considered to be similar to the opportunities for mineral exploration and development as discussed above for Planning Issue 29.

32. The need to improve critical and essential habitats of threatened and endangered plant and animal species.

Forest standards and guidelines provide specific direction for the maintenance and improvement of habitats of threatened and endangered plant and animal species

33. The need to provide goods and services efficiently.

The proposed Plan provides for an efficient mix of goods and services consistent with achievement of the goals of the Plan. Also, the Plan directs that all activities be performed in a cost efficient manner

34. The need for less Government restrictions at the Forest level.

Within the limits of the Forest's authority, the proposed Plan imposes only those restrictions or controls necessary for the protection of Forest lands and resources, and personal safety.

35. The effects of management of the National Forest on natural resource oriented industries and local communities.

National Forest management activities were considered to have the potential for significant effects on the social and economic settings if they affected one or more of the following factors. population dynamics, ways of life, land tenure and use, and economic opportunities. Management activities considered to have major impacts on the social and economic environments include timber harvest levels, Forest Receipt Act Payments, range management, recreation management, and overall federal expenditures (budget). The social and economic effects of each of the alternatives are discussed in Chapter IV of the FEIS.

36. The need to identify to what extent and on what basis should National Forest lands be allocated for multiple-use, dominant use, and single use to achieve production of needed goods and services and enhance environmental quality.

The resource management program specified in this Plan is the recommended mix between multiple-use, dominant use, and single use to achieve production of needed goods and services, and to maintain and enhance environmental quality. Refer to Table 4-1 for a Forest-wide summary of prescription allocations

37. The need to protect forest resources from disease, pests, and similar threats.

Forest standards and guidelines provide for implementation of an integrated pest management approach to provide for protection of forest resources from disease, pests, and other threats.



38. The need to identify typical examples of important botanical, aquatic, and geological types and protect them through establishment of Research Natural Areas, Special Interest Areas, or National Conservation Areas.

The Plan establishes four additional Research Natural Areas to preserve representative examples of specific botanical ecosystems and specifies the goals for their management. Forest standards and guidelines provide direction for the completion of a Forest-wide inventory to identify representations of the remaining biological component, as well as for the aquatic and geologic elements of the Research Natural Area system. The proposed Plan also provides for the evaluation of four candidate Special Interest Areas for designation.

39. The need to adjust land ownership as needed to support resource management goals.

The Plan emphasizes ownership adjustment to improve efficiency and reduce long-term management costs. This direction will be implemented through all available procedures such as exchange, purchase, and donation.

40. The need to regulate growth in electronic sites and protect them from vandalism.

Under the Plan, new electronic sites are permitted only when existing sites are fully occupied, or are shown to be inadequate for the proposed use, and when the proposed site is not in conflict with other management objectives for the area. Potential vandalism will be a consideration when selecting new locations, and in the development of permit clauses.